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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period March 2024

Released 12/06/2024

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Key statistics

In the March quarter 2024:

- 48 disputes occurred.
- 12,800 employees were involved and 16,800 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 6 industries and in 7 states and territories.

During the year ended March 2024, there were 207 disputes and a total of 108,300 working days lost.

Key statistics

| Quarter | | Year ended | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | December Quarter 2023 | March Quarter 2024 | March Quarter 2023 | March Quarter 2024 |
| Number of disputes (no.) | | | | | |
| | New | 47 | 36 | 191 | 193 |
| | Total | 67 | 48 | 198 | 207 |
| Employees involved ('000) | | | | | |
| | New | 14.3 | 10.6 | 115.0 | 51.8 |
| | Total | 18.6 | 12.8 | 117.4 | 52.9 |
| Working days lost ('000) | | | | | |
| | | 44.2 | 16.8 | 184.9 | 108.3 |

Overview

In the March quarter 2024, there were:

- 48 disputes, a decrease from 67 in the previous quarter.
- 12,800 employees involved, a decrease from 18,600 in the previous quarter.
- 16,800 working days lost, a decrease from 44,200 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 207 disputes occurred, 9 more than in the previous year.
- 108,300 working days were lost, 76,600 less than in the previous year.

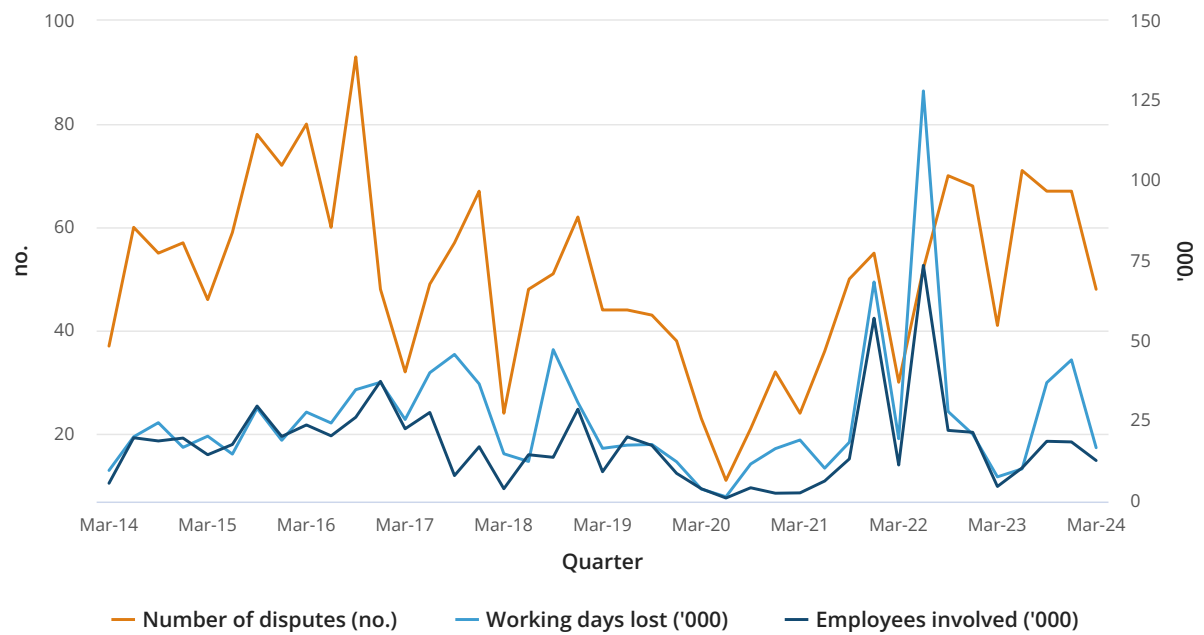
Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

| | Number of disputes | | Employees involved | | Working days lost |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | New (no.) | Total (no.) | New ('000) | Total ('000) | ('000) |
| March Quarter 2022 | 22 | 30 | 10.1 | 11.4 | 19.6 |
| June Quarter 2022 | 45 | 52 | 71.2 | 73.7 | 128.1 |
| September Quarter 2022 | 60 | 70 | 21.2 | 22.2 | 28.1 |
| December Quarter 2022 | 53 | 68 | 18.4 | 21.6 | 21.0 |
| March Quarter 2023 | 33 | 41 | 4.1 | 4.7 | 7.7 |
| June Quarter 2023 | 57 | 71 | 9.6 | 10.5 | 10.2 |
| September Quarter 2023 | 53 | 67 | 17.4 | 18.8 | 37.1 |
| December Quarter 2023 | 47 | 67 | 14.3 | 18.6 | 44.2 |
| March Quarter 2024 | 36 | 48 | 10.6 | 12.8 | 16.8 |

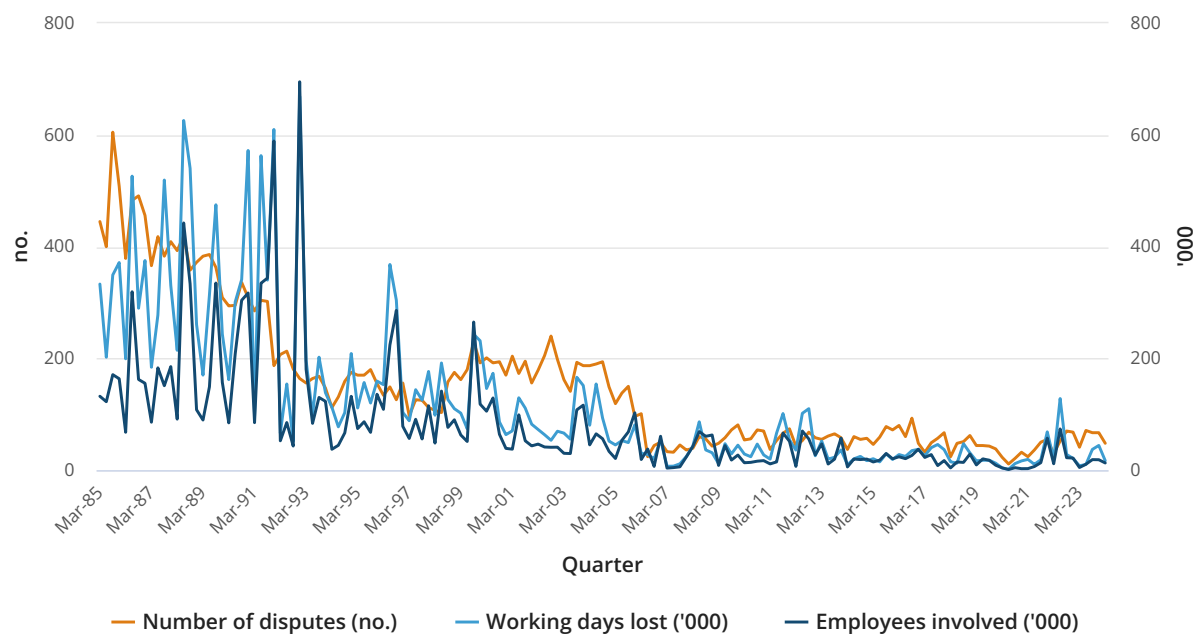
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the March quarter, disputes occurred in six industries. Over a third (42%) of the total working days lost were in the Other Industries industry.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

| | | December Quarter 2023 | | March Quarter 2024 | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| | | Working days lost ('000) | Working days lost per thousand employees (no.) | Working days lost ('000) | Working days lost per thousand employees (no.) |
| Mining | | | | | |
| | Coal mining | - | - | - | - |
| | Other mining | np | np | - | - |
| Manufacturing | | | | | |
| | Metal product etc (a) | np | np | 0.6 | 1.8 |
| | Other manufacturing | 12.8 | 23.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Construction | | 2.5 | 2.3 | 3.2 | 3.0 |
| Transport, postal & warehousing | | 13.3 | 19.9 | 5.4 | 8.3 |
| Education & training; Health care & social assistance | | 9.2 | 2.8 | 0.4 | |
| Other industries (a) | | 3.8 | 0.6 | 7.1 | |
| All industries | | 44.2 | 3.4 | 16.8 | |

(a) see Glossary - [Industry \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/mar-2024#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/mar-2024#glossary) - for details of industries included
(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated
(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

States and territories

Disputes occurred in seven states and territories in the March quarter, with over half (56%) of the total working days lost occurring in Queensland.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories



| December Quarter 2023 | | | March Quarter 2024 | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| | Working days lost ('000) | Working days lost per thousand employees (no.) | Working days lost ('000) | Working days lost per thousand employees (no.) |
| New South Wales | 5.0 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 0.5 |
| Victoria | 18.5 | 5.4 | 2.4 | 0.7 |
| Queensland | 11.0 | 4.2 | 9.4 | 3.6 |
| South Australia | 5.2 | 6.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Western Australia | 3.9 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 1.8 |
| Tasmania | 0.3 | 1.1 | np | np |
| Northern Territory | 0.1 | 0.5 | - | - |
| Australian Capital Territory | 0.3 | 1.2 | np | np |
| Australia | 44.2 | 3.4 | 16.8 | 1.3 |

(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 91% of disputes (50 of 55) which ended in the December quarter 2023.

Cause of dispute for disputes which ended during the quarter

| | | September Quarter 2023 | | | December Quarter 2023 | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Number of disputes (no.) | Employees involved ('000) | Working days lost ('000) | Number of disputes (no.) | Employees involved ('000) | Working days lost ('000) |
| EB(a) related | | | | | | | |
| | Remuneration | 14 | 1.5 | 5.1 | 20 | 2.4 | 9.4 |
| | Employment conditions | 23 | 9.7 | 17.5 | 30 | 12.4 | 37.9 |
| | Other | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Non- EB(a) related | | | | | | | |
| | Remuneration | 1 | np | np | - | - | - |
| | Employment conditions | 2 | np | np | - | - | - |
| | Health and safety | 4 | 1.1 | 1.8 | 2 | 0.1 | - |
| | Job security | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Managerial policy | - | - | - | 1 | 0.1 | - |
| | Union issues | 1 | 0.3 | 0.2 | - | - | - |
| | Other | 2 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.1 | - |
| Total | | 47 | 14.3 | 26.3 | 55 | 17.0 | |

(a) Enterprise Bargaining (EB)

(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Feedback

Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 55 disputes which ended in the December quarter, 18 lasted up to and including 1 day. These disputes had:

- 8,400 employees involved; and
- 7,300 working days lost.

Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

| | September Quarter 2023 | | | December Quarter 2023 | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Number of disputes (no.) | Employees involved ('000) | Working days lost ('000) | Number of disputes (no.) | Employees involved ('000) | Working days lost ('000) |
| Up to and including 1 day | 20 | 10.1 | 7.7 | 18 | 8.4 | 7.3 |
| Over 1 day and up to including 2 days | 6 | 1.8 | 2.8 | 12 | 3.7 | 4.5 |
| Over 2 and less than 5 days | 14 | 1.5 | 5.1 | 11 | 3.1 | 10.2 |
| 5 and less than 10 days | 2 | 0.1 | 0.6 | 8 | 0.8 | 6.5 |
| 10 days and over | 5 | 0.8 | 10.0 | 6 | 1.0 | 20.3 |
| Total | 47 | 14.3 | 26.3 | 55 | 17.0 | 48.8 |

Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 84% of disputes (46 of 55) which ended in the December quarter 2023.

Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

| | September Quarter 2023 | | | December Quarter 2023 | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Number of disputes (no.) | Employees involved ('000) | Working days lost ('000) | Number of disputes (no.) | Employees involved ('000) | Working days lost ('000) |
| Negotiation without intervention of a third party | 8 | 1.6 | 4.8 | 5 | np | np |
| State legislation | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Federal legislation | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Pre-determined return to work | 36 | 12.6 | 21.4 | 46 | 16.5 | 36.3 |
| Resumption without negotiation | 3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.3 | 10.3 |
| Mediation | - | - | - | 2 | np | np |
| Other reasons | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 47 | 14.3 | 26.3 | 55 | 17.0 | 48.8 |

(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Data downloads

Time Series Spreadsheets

Download all (485.72 KB)

Feedback

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[58.5 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

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[54.09 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[53.88 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[63.09 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[61.91 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[93.49 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[63.53 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

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[79.5 KB]

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Methodology

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, March 2024](#)